

For the Good of All Families

Affirming Our Interdependence



Marriage is indeed a sacred institution. In the Christian tradition, the marriage covenant mirrors the covenant between

God and humanity that permeates our scriptures. Recognizing marriage as a foundational relationship for human growth, the religious community has always supported marriage and families. From pre-marital counseling, to marriage enrichment programs, to family ministries and youth groups, the family is a major focus of congregational life. The church knows that healthy and strong marriages benefit children and adults and that these marriages can be an inspiration for all who seek to be in relationship.

The church also knows that children suffer without stable, nurturing environments. But the new wave of government welfare policy recommendations regarding marriage and family assumes that marriage is a cure-all for systemic social problems and that the work of promoting healthy relationships isn't being done adequately. The current welfare policy proposals also suggest that what works for economically secure couples will work for low-income families.

The reality is that marriage will never substitute for necessary social programs, or address the injustices of our economy. And regardless of current policy considerations, the religious commu-

nity will continue to step up to the plate and do the important work of nurturing couples and families. In so doing, congregations must remain vigilant and self-observant in order to avoid focusing on the "dream" family (the heterosexual, two-parent family with biological children), while ignoring the current reality. Congregations that understand the real life conditions facing today's families have multiple opportunities to witness God's breaking through in new ways.

Most contemporary families no longer fit into the mold of the two-parent nuclear family. Indeed, the stable, nuclear family has never been guaranteed. For multiple reasons, cultural, social and economic, as well as unexpected life events, families simply cannot be boxed into a single form. However, in our national debates and sometimes even in our own hearts, we yearn for a "perfect" two-parent family where tragedy never strikes and where social and cultural changes have no impact. In the best-case scenario, we are resilient enough to face addiction, disability, domestic violence, poverty, war or death, and to adapt — creating family in new and unexpected ways. In all too frequent scenarios, we suffer, our children suffer, and we have trouble forming new relationships. Or, we find that our own unusual family — the family that includes adopted siblings and children, stepparents and half siblings — is far more usual than we ever knew. Congregations have a crucial role to play, affirming flexible family formations and caring for those who grieve the loss of a covenant bond or loss of a loved one.

Message from the Justice for Women Working Group

While families may be fragile, some are seriously vulnerable. The shift of available jobs from the manufacturing sector to the lower paying service sector, the decrease in real wages, the lack of support for care-giving and the resulting disempowerment and dislocation increase the burden of stress on already fragile families. In addition, race and gender discrimination means that some people are even more dramatically affected by income insecurity. More and more women, particularly single mothers, are entering the workplace and working longer hours than ever before. At the same time, child care needs remain unaddressed, increasing children's vulnerability and absorbing large portions of their parents' meager income. The economic stresses facing many families cannot be ignored. Congregations can take the moral high ground and assert that poverty in the richest country in the world is intolerable. Congregations also can bear witness to the ways that poverty diminishes people's ability to build and sustain family relationships. ■

FAMILY AND WELFARE POLICY:

The Role of Church and State

beginning in 1996 with the passage of welfare reform legislation, the United States government adopted a policy to promote marriage and began enlisting the help of local religious organizations in its marriage promotion program. The government believes that poverty is caused in part by the breakdown of family structure and that one way to overcome poverty is to build strong two-parent families.

Government concern for family structure has led to the development of several pol-

Why are government policies about welfare and family of concern to the religious community?

The religious community has always supported strong and healthy relationships, marriages and families. The life of congregations includes programs that enhance the family, and many religious organizations also have considered it a part of their ministry to engage in public policy work on issues that affect families.

In our current political climate, in

What are some of the policies being considered or implemented?

Current policies, initiatives and demonstration projects nationwide fall under several main rubrics: marriage promotion, prevention of out-of-wedlock births, and fatherhood initiatives. Within each of these categories, a variety of programs are being implemented. The box (below) offers some details on the programs, which vary from state to state.



▼ Marriage promotion programs

include: pre-marital counseling; monthly bonuses for married couples on welfare; incentives for getting married, such as reduced fees for marriage licenses; and divorce prevention through marriage education and counseling, and through “covenant marriage” campaigns, which include relationship counseling, spiritual direction and sometimes waiting periods prior to divorce.

▼ **Prevention of out-of-wedlock birth programs** have a variety of emphases: education about adoption and maternity group homes; teen pregnancy prevention programs (e.g., identifying role models for teens, encouraging activities that develop self-esteem, identifying ways for teens to remain committed to educa-

icy approaches, which fall under the rubric of “family formation” policies or programs. Family formation policies are focused on:

- decreasing the number of out-of-wedlock births;
- promoting two-parent families; and
- increasing father involvement.

This new government policy raises many questions about how families are constructed and the political, cultural, social and economic factors that strengthen and weaken family structure.

which a faith-based response to social needs is encouraged, congregations have more reason than ever to educate themselves about public policy issues. As government turns to the religious community to care for poor individuals and families, it is important for congregations to identify the pros and cons of various social welfare proposals. Only then, can congregations make informed decisions about whether or not to partner with government and whether or not they share the same goals.

Why are these policies debated?

These policies have prompted a debate primarily because marriage is such a personal and private decision. In this resource, however, we are particularly concerned with how these programs impact low-income people and particularly low-income women. Low-income mothers and fathers have a very particular set of needs but marriage promotion efforts run the risk of focusing on the general population, overlooking issues specific to poor families such as the lack of employment and income. ■

About our current welfare policy...

A PRIMER ON TANF (TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES)

What is TANF Reauthorization?

TANF or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families is the welfare program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) after the 1996 welfare reform law was passed. Because TANF involved a major overhaul of the country's welfare system it was scheduled to be reviewed, revised and reauthorized in 2002. TANF reauthorization, however, continues to be extended and currently is scheduled for Spring, 2004. Reauthorization has surfaced much

families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives;" 2) "to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;" 3) "to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies;" 4) "to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families."

Two major features distinguish TANF from AFDC. TANF does not operate on the federal level. Instead, the federal government distributes state-level block grants, which allow states the freedom to design programs with-

tion and seek higher education opportunities, sexuality education that informs teens of the variety of pregnancy prevention options); and, abstinence-until-marriage education.

▼ **Fatherhood initiatives** include a range of programs, but should be distinguished from "father's rights" programs. Some fatherhood programs emphasize peer support for fathers, such as: job training, career counseling, post-incarceration support services, or parenting classes. Other fatherhood programs are concerned with child support enforcement and promoting "marriageability" of unwed fathers. There is a growing overlap in these types of programs as funding sources increase around child support enforcement and marriage promotion.



debate particularly because of proposed increases in work requirements for welfare recipients; the desperate need for increased child care funding; the current economic recession and high rates of unemployment; and the proposal to spend \$300 million annually for marriage promotion.

What are the goals and distinctive features of welfare reform and TANF?

There are four guiding principles of the 1996 welfare reform act, also known as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act or the PRA, that continue to influence welfare debates and the content of the TANF program. They are: 1) "to provide assistance to needy

in broad guidelines to achieve the four goals described above. Secondly, TANF benefits are time limited. According to the PRA guidelines, single adults can only receive cash benefits for two years in an entire lifetime. Adults with children can only receive cash benefits for five years in an entire lifetime and for no more than two years in any one period of eligibility. States vary in their implementation of this guideline, in some cases making time limits more or less restrictive.

Contact Mary Cooper at the National Council of Churches in Washington, DC (mcooper@nccusa.org) for information on how to participate in advocacy related to TANF. ■

THE MANY TIES THAT BIND

Drawing on Christian Social Teaching

here are some principles our faith tradition offers congregations about family well-being and our interdependence.

Seek stability, security and equity for all.

An important sense of solidarity can be achieved by acknowledging the shared vulnerability and basic needs of all families. All families are vulnerable to illness, disability, or death. Most families share the need for economic security, freedom from family violence, affordable health insurance, and child care supports. Indeed, pre-marital counseling and marriage enrichment programs can help couples approach marriage with realism and commitment in the face of such vulnerabilities. There is only so much that individual families can do, however, to ensure their own stability and security. For this reason, families and congregations also need to advocate for public policies that promote stability and security.¹

Advocate for the poor. Our country has the resources to meet everyone's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care and work. When it does not meet these basic needs, it fails the test of justice.² Individuals and congregations can advocate for social, economic and community supports for all people. Today, most households require two incomes. And in many cases, one or both parents work two jobs, often two low-paying jobs with few or no benefits. Undoubtedly, jobs at a living wage are a staple of healthy families and healthy communities. Congregations can also advocate for quality pre-school programs, after-school programs, and public schools to encourage human development, so people can be good intimate partners and parents. Quality child care, elder care and care for the ill and disabled are in all our best interests.

Honor diversity. Our country is witnessing new and diverse family forms due to our ethnic diversity, the increased financial independence of women, and the wel-

coming of gay and lesbian parents with children. Each family is to be valued for its own strengths. A single-parent family may have formed due to a family or social cri-


sis, but it is possible that it formed from a position of choice and strength. The diversity of healthy families needs to be celebrated. God created a diverse and complex world; rarely is there only one way.

Practice covenant faithfulness. Now and again congregations have to remember their calling, as people gathered in

faith, to serve the community, particularly persons in need, and the world at large. Jesus' commitment to the poor, the widow and the orphan can serve as a reminder that the church is for those who are vulnerable. The vision of God's commonwealth impels us to work for healthy and just relationships for all of God's children. Congregations can challenge their healthy and stable families to enter into ministries of hospitality, care giving and the work of justice. As long as people are lonely, poor and vulnerable, stronger families are called to embrace those families who are more fragile. Families that practice giving can create a climate in which one day they may be able to receive in their own time of need. Covenant faithfulness is best expressed in how we care for the poor, the hungry, the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

Uphold the common good. Current welfare policy remains focused on the personal responsibility and individual morality, or lack thereof, of poor people. Low-income families with children and people who are sick, disabled, unemployed and underemployed constitute the "poor people" who must turn to the government for help in times of need. In fact, the 1996 legislation that resulted in our current welfare policy was called the "Personal Responsibility Act." This single-minded focus on personal responsibility is often heard in calls for self-sufficiency and ending welfare dependence. As the perceived purveyors of moral authority in our society, congregations have an important role to play in pointing out that there can be no personal responsibility without social responsibility. Indeed, our current policy preoccupation with self-sufficiency is not in keeping with Christian social and ethical teachings, which emphasize mutual caring and interdependence.

Practice solidarity. Justice and love are the basis of our Christian tradition; therefore, the issues of poor women and children strike to the heart of our discipleship.



As the perceived purveyors of moral authority in our society, congregations have an important role to play in pointing out that there can be no personal responsibility without social responsibility.

? Do you think marriage prevents poverty? Explain how you see the issues of marriage and poverty as connected.

Is your vision of family different from that of your grandparents, your parents or your children?

? If you are participating in a group discussion, identify the variety of family forms that are represented in your group (married, single, divorced, domestic partners, adoptive children, etc.). How many different family forms exist in your congregation?

? If a family member loses a job or cannot work due to illness, where do you turn for support?

? How do you reconcile the individualism of U.S. culture with Gospel values of interdependence? Do you believe in both? Which values do you expect of yourself? Of others?

? Review your family's history over several generations. What family forms have been present in your own family history?

? Review your family work history. Did your grandparents both work? Inside or outside the home? Your parents? Your great grandparents? Did family members have many types of jobs or one particular skill? How many different jobs have you held as an adult?

? Who cared for you as an infant and young child? If your mother worked outside the home, how was child care managed?

? How can local congregations support fragile families and families in crisis?

? Can you think of a time when you realized that you were vulnerable? How did it awaken a sense of empathy?

? What is the proper role of government in family formation?

For women of all backgrounds, the current government focus on the private lives of poor women – the realm of intimate relationships, marriage and reproduction – should sound a warning. As we awaken to our shared vulnerability – economic

insecurity, troubled relationships, the possibility of divorce, family violence and ill health – the path to solidarity with low-income women is revealed and we may find that in the doing of justice we experience right relationship. ■

BIBLE STUDY

The Bible's first theme is the relationship between God and the people. This relationship is upheld through a covenant: You shall be my people and I shall be your God. That same kind of covenant faithfulness is expected in all our relationships: Love your neighbor as yourself. The traditional nuclear family as we know it in the 21st century is not a common biblical theme, yet there are many references to ways in which people relate to each other and live with each other. To deepen your understanding of covenant relationships, read the scripture passages below and discuss the forms of family that are presented in them. How does each of these passages broaden or change our definition of family?

Mark 3:31-35: Does Jesus imply two different meanings for the word "family" or does he mean literally that the new family replaces the blood family?

John 19:25-27: Consider various contemporary situations in which we either fail or succeed to care for familyless people.

Esther 2:15-17: Here is the story of an adopted Jewish woman marrying outside her faith to a man (a king) who divorces his wife in order to marry her. In light of this passage, do you think today's complex family and marriage patterns are unique?

Exodus 2:15-21: Why do we sometimes condemn interracial/intercultural marriage when we have biblical models such as this?

.....

While humanity is called to practice "hesed" – loving kindness and fidelity to one another, a kind of covenant faithfulness – the Bible acknowledges that human beings often fall short. When it comes to the sharing of resources, people tend to hoard. God's creation is for the common good. There is enough for everyone, if only people share. Look at the passages below and discuss how the Bible addresses systemic economic inequality.

Deuteronomy 15:1-11: What are the ways in which everyone's needs are met and wealth is to be redistributed in ancient Israel?

Acts 4:32-35: What does this passage say to us today about our possessions and our private property?

Matthew 20: 1-15: What does this tell us about the way workers were hired and paid in biblical times? Do you consider that the payment was unfair? Would you today?

Exodus 16:4-6, 16-21, 31: Gathering more manna than needed yielded no benefit. What can we say about possessions today?

- Marriage Promotion Efforts and Their Implementation, p. 6-7
- The Complexity of Fatherhood Initiatives, p. 8-9
- The Tragedy of Family Violence, p. 10-12

The debates about promoting marriage and encouraging two-parent families tend to polarize around the causes of poverty and the perceived solutions to poverty. Does a “culture” of single parenthood lead to poverty or does poverty lead to single parenthood? Are out-of-wedlock births the cause of poverty or does poverty lead to out-of-wedlock births? Will marriage end poverty or do good jobs promote marriage? And while it appears that little progress toward ending poverty can be made in the face of such political battles, there are actually important issues and strategies being surfaced through this debate. Congregations that take the time to understand these issues may be in a position to offer real clarity on strategies for ending poverty.

As mentioned earlier there are several different ways that marriage promotion efforts are being expressed programmatically. When these programs, and the questions they raise, are examined more closely, they point to ways that congregations can support parents and children.

Pre-Marital Counseling

Several states have allocated money for promoting marriage through public education, and through marriage and relationship skills counseling. These efforts have taken the form of handbooks or videos given to people seeking marriage licenses, marriage counseling courses offered at community service agencies, mandated marriage and relationships skills for high school seniors, and state contracts that include a particular curriculum that all sectors of society are encouraged to use.

Marriage counseling and education may now be in fashion, but the church has a long history of doing this work and there are plenty of models and experiences upon which to draw. Clergy are widely expected to offer marriage counseling or

Issues in Family Policy

MARRIAGE PROMOTION EFFORTS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

refer a couple to counseling prior to any wedding ceremony. Prepare/Enrich, Inc. is one organization that trains clergy in working with couples. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors is another good resource for counseling referrals.

Congregations and clergy are encouraged to read and evaluate any marriage preparation or promotion curriculum

consider the particular stresses that those families face, such as unemployment, underemployment, job training and education needs, addiction, lack of parenting and child care resources, debt reduction, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Eligibility Requirements, Incentives and Bonuses

Responding to the goals of welfare reform, some states have taken to implementing financial incentives and bonuses in order to encourage marriage and increase father involvement. For example, couples that participate in pre-marital counseling may have their marriages expedited or pay a reduced fee for their marriage license. In the state of West Virginia, married couples on welfare receive a \$100 monthly cash bonus. A major concern is that marriage promotion efforts will be linked to eligibility for public assistance. In other words, people will only be eligible for public assistance if they participate in a required marriage promotion program.

The religious community can play a policy advocacy role and evaluate the specifics of marriage promotion programs as they develop. Not only are they potentially dangerous for low-income women and children, they also are an affront to the dignity of marriage. Any effort to put a price tag on marriage degrades the sanctity of marriage and the personal decision individuals make to marry. Congregations can educate themselves about such programs and insist that marriage promotion efforts not be attached to eligibility for welfare or be commodified through financial incentives and bonuses.

Divorce Prevention

The state of Oklahoma is using TANF dollars for a state-wide marriage initiative, which includes training state employees, community service workers and clergy in their PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) curriculum. Oklahoma has a high rate of divorce and

sees pre-marital and relationship counseling as a way to lower those rates. Some states have enacted covenant marriage laws that offer couples the opportunity to sign a covenant when they apply for their marriage license. The covenant requirements vary from state to state but may include pre-marital counseling, counseling prior to divorce and longer waiting periods before a divorce is granted. The covenant marriage agreements have not been widely embraced by couples in the states where they are offered.

Covenant fidelity is an integral part of the Christian faith. Indeed, a covenant is what binds a congregation together, holds the larger church in relationship and undergirds family and community on many levels. Our faith also calls us to do justice, to support and care for one another in order to be faithful to our covenant bond, but also to reckon with covenants that are broken and failing. For several decades now, the marriage enrichment movement has offered many denominations and lay people a vehicle for creating strong, healthy and fulfilling marriages. While the hard work of relationship building is a required element of the covenant bond, individuals should not be constrained to stay in failing relationships, once the covenant bond is broken. Congregations can offer a realistic and reasonable voice about the wonders of covenant fidelity and the importance of developing healthy bonds, and the value of recognizing when the covenant bond has been broken.

Budget Priorities and Legislative Choices

Congregations can influence budget priorities and monitor expenditures for various social programs. Clearly, healthy marriages are a good thing, and helping individuals prepare themselves financially and emotionally for marriage is a good thing. However, a lone focus on marriage is problematic when low-income people face multiple dire needs. Congregations can impact how states prioritize their anti-poverty programs and how they are funded. For example, congregations might inquire: Are marriage promotion efforts receiving more emphasis or disproportionate resources than child care or transportation? How are marriage promotion efforts being funded and who are the recipients of these programs? For example, Oklahoma is using \$10 million in

unspent TANF money to pay for marriage promotion programs for the entire population, not just low-income people. A congregation may want to suggest that unspent TANF money be used for job training, child care subsidies or other pressing concerns facing low-income people in your state.

The religious community is in an excellent position to articulate how income support strategies – primarily job creation, job training and living wages – can increase marriage rates and strengthen families. On page 13, we list a number of policy advocacy organizations working on these issues. In addition, congregations can articulate ways that welfare and child support policies can be reformed in order to break down the barriers that keep par-

ents apart. On page 13, readers are directed to the current policy recommendations promoted by the ecumenical community. Religious congregations are called to ensure that all the children of God receive those things that make them emotionally, physically and psychologically well individuals. Only when individuals are healthy and well developed, can intimate partnerships be encouraged in good conscience. The self-development of God's people is our shared responsibility. In addition, there are many other concerns raised by marriage promotion efforts, such as privacy, coercion, domestic violence and the privileging of heterosexual, two-parent, biological families. These are also critical issues that the faith community is called to address. ■

QUIZ: Navigating a Thorny Debate

Below are some comments that are heard in the debates about marriage promotion and poverty. Take a few minutes to read these claims and check agree or disagree as you go down the list.

AGREE DISAGREE

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Two-parent families are better for children. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Out-of-wedlock births are immoral. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Two-parent families have higher incomes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | With counseling, marriages can be saved and can last. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fathers need to be more involved in the lives of their children. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marriage reduces the risk of domestic violence. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Government pays for the social impact of divorce and single parenting, so why not use government funds to prevent divorce and single parenting? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Faith formation in the family can be a source of strength. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Some women remain in abusive relationships because of the influence of their religion or their church.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Marriage is a personal and private matter and is not the government's business.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Two-parent families are not immune to poverty.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Single mothers would marry if they could find intimate partners with "marriageable" incomes.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Declining marriage rates mirror the decline in job opportunities.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Job creation, job training and higher education opportunities would increase marriage rates.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Poverty status has more impact on child well-being than marriage status.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Sometimes family violence begins after the couple makes a formal commitment to each other.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Lack of marriage is a symptom of poverty not a cause.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Some unwed fathers are in crisis. They need financial, physical and psychological help before they can consider marriage.</i> |

There are no right or wrong answers. However, the first eight statements are often used to support marriage promotion as a means to reducing poverty. The second set of statements, in italics, is often used against marriage promotion efforts. It is not unusual to agree with statements in both categories.

THE COMPLEXITY OF FATHERHOOD INITIATIVES

8

The Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy considers itself a “feminist” fatherhood organization. We spoke with Senior Policy Analyst, Jacquelyn Boggess, about current efforts to increase father involvement in families led by single mothers.

What policies are being promoted to increase father involvement?

At the state level and at the federal level, in

both the previous and current presidential administrations, and in a bi-partisan legislative effort, government has, in the context of father involvement, supported marriage promotion efforts, fatherhood initiatives and child support reforms. It is important to note, however, that these proposals and initiatives have, in some cases, not addressed and, in other cases, not proven to be successful in their attempt to address the most intractable

The more stable men in the neighborhood and in the community-based organizations realized the necessity of reaching out to poor men who were struggling with potentially destructive problems.

barriers to father involvement. Some of those barriers include lack of education and training, lack of employment and employment opportunities, race and class discrimination, criminal records, and lack of identifying and validating credentials (driver’s license, permanent address, and previous work history). Others are barriers created by sociological and psychological factors in the men’s lives such as drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness.

Not all fatherhood programs work with low-income men. Can you describe the range of fatherhood programs?

The so-called “father’s rights” organizations – until very recently – have been the most visible and vocal type of fatherhood organization. It is important to note that these father’s rights organizations usually have been comprised of white, middle and working class men who are interested in coming together to discuss and develop strategy for using the family courts and lawyers to gain visitation rights, reduce child support payments, and dispute sexual and physical abuse charges.

In contrast, low-income fatherhood programs are service programs designed to help low-income fathers by providing neighborhood mentors and peer support, and to assist in the men’s attempt to find work and get education and training. Peer support provides opportunity for discussion around issues of involvement with their children, interaction with the children’s mothers, and concerns about pro-

viding for themselves and their children while dealing with poverty and racial discrimination.

It is important to note that low-income fatherhood programs developed spontaneously in community-based organizations that were already serving women and children. The more stable men in the neighborhood and in the community-based organizations realized the necessity of reaching out to poor men who were struggling with potentially destructive problems. Currently, state and federal governments are funding already existing programs and creating new fatherhood programs based on this model, but it is likely these government funders have an agenda which includes marriage promotion and government reimbursement for welfare.

What are the most important services fatherhood programs can offer low-income men?

There are two essential services fatherhood programs must be able to offer low-income men. One is peer and mentoring support for men (particularly men of color) facing the issues of discrimination, lack of education and training, unemployment, and intractable poverty. The other essential service is preparedness for – and referral to – employment.

Child support enforcement appears to be one way that policies are aiming to increase the responsibility of fathers. What do you understand to be the rights and responsibilities of low-income men when it comes to child support payments?

Whatever rights parents have to be involved in their non-residential children's lives are to be decided on an individual basis by a judge in the local family court. Hopefully, this decision is made based on a concern for the safety and well-being of all parties, most particularly the children. Unfortunately, however, low-income mothers and fathers very rarely have access to the family court system because they cannot afford professional legal services. Except for child support awards, this decision about parents' rights is often not made in the case of low-income families.

As to parents' responsibilities, each

parent is responsible to support his or her children financially. By law, this responsibility is based on the parents' ability to provide. The design of social service programs for low-income fathers is based, in large part, on this financial responsibility. The vast majority of men in low-income fatherhood programs want to be able to provide for their children, above and beyond the child's financial needs. However, the men are poor and they have very little ability to pay. In addition, the child support policies, which are said to be motivated by a inclination to increase father involvement, cannot have that effect for children who live in families that have received welfare benefits. What little money their fathers have to pay in "child support" is, overwhelmingly, retained by the state and federal governments. Poor fathers who want to take care of their children, but see their money going to reimburse the state, do not feel effective or useful to their children, and they are less likely to stay involved in their children's lives.

How can parents who are separated bear responsibility for the shared child?

This is, of course, an issue that affects all families in which the parents do not live together. It does not apply particularly to low-income families. What is important to know about the low-income families that are being affected by child support and marriage promotion policy is that many of these "non-marital" situations are cohabiting families whose reasons for not getting married sometimes include concerns that marriage would impact their eligibility for social service programs, including child care and housing. The fathers (and mothers and children) living

What little money their fathers have to pay in "child support" is, overwhelmingly, retained by the state and federal governments. Poor fathers who want to take care of their children, but see their money going to reimburse the state, do not feel effective or useful to their children, and they are less likely to stay involved in their children's lives.

in these families are, nevertheless, subjected to marriage promotion and child support policies.

What are the potential dangers of promoting father involvement in low-income families?

To the extent that fatherhood programs encourage men to return to their families, and encourage them in their "right" to control and direct individual family members, these programs can endanger families in which domestic violence has occurred or potentially may occur. Again this is not an issue that affects only low-income families. There is the possibility of domestic violence and abuse in all classes of families.

Fatherhood programs should not be asked to become batterer intervention programs. Representatives of some of these programs have said that, often, they do not know how to approach the issue of domestic violence. They worry about alienating the men, and about putting women at more risk. Fatherhood programs, just like all other social service programs, must be administered

within the context of the reality of domestic violence in our society and in the lives of low-income families. A fatherhood program, at any point in time, may be serving a current batterer, a future batterer, and someone who'll never batter. Encouraging and supporting father involvement must be based in an acknowledgment of these possibilities. ■

Jacquelyn Boggess and the Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy can be reached at 25 North Pinckney Street, Suite 210, Madison, WI 53703, 608-257-3148, www.cffpp.org.

THE TRAGEDY OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

below we interview Jody Raphael about how issues of domestic violence are intricately related to current marriage promotion and family formation policies. Jody Raphael's groundbreaking book *Saving Bernice: Battered Women, Welfare and Poverty* was published in 2000 and is a must-read for everyone committed to ending poverty. The pervasiveness of family violence, particularly among low-income families, is a wake-up call for congregations, policy makers and all who seek economic and social justice. Bernice Hampton's story of violence and poverty, and her eventual escape, is the backbone of this book and provides the critical insight necessary for truly reforming welfare policies. We are honored that Bernice reponded through Jody to some of the questions below. (*Saving Bernice* by Jody Raphael, Northeastern University Press, 2000. Currently in paperback for \$16.95).

What is the rate of domestic violence among welfare recipients? How does that compare to the general population?

The highest rate of domestic violence (as opposed to emotional abuse) experienced within a twelve month period, as recorded by any national research project with the general population, is six percent. Numerous research studies have found

that the prevalence of current domestic violence among women on welfare is between 20 and 30 percent. Very recent research, that is, post-welfare reform, obtains similar results; in a sample of 276 welfare recipients in Kern County, California, in 1998-9, 17.4 percent of the women were current domestic violence victims, and in Stanislaus County 25 percent were. Researchers obtained similar figures in a recent longitudinal study of women on welfare in a small city in Michigan. Readers interested in these studies can access summaries at www.ssw.umich.edu/trapped.

In your book we learn how past experiences of domestic violence result in post-traumatic stress disorder, greatly impacting women's economic and social stability. What are the estimates of the percentage of women on welfare who were former victims of domestic violence (survivors of domestic violence)?

Although about 25 percent of the women in the general population will experience domestic violence within their lifetime, every research project uniformly finds that 66 percent of welfare recipients have experienced domestic violence in the past. Obviously welfare plays a large role in a safety net that enables women to escape or survive violence.



Jody Raphael, author of *Saving Bernice: Battered Women, Welfare and Poverty*

Abusers, many of whom are unemployed or underemployed, are threatened by women's efforts at self-sufficiency... Many of these men therefore use violence and threats of violence to sabotage women's efforts at education, training, and work...

Low-income teenagers and young women are more vulnerable to domestic violence. Why is that?

National research finds that age is one certain predictor of domestic violence: the younger the age, the more likely is domestic violence. The relative youth and inexperience of young girls makes them prey to older boys and men who, through age, experience, and monetary advantage, can more easily subject them to power and control. And, unfortunately in our society, one of the ways in which boys and men exert that power and control is through violence and threats of violence. Poor girls are even more vulnerable to this kind of power and control, due to their economic and emotional neediness. The Center for Impact Research's large study of teen girls on welfare found that 55 percent were current victims of domestic violence, much of it severe physical abuse.

What are some of the ways that domestic violence impacts a woman's movement out of poverty or from welfare to work?

Abusers, many of whom are unemployed or underemployed, are threatened by women's efforts at self-sufficiency. They fear that once the women have resources of their own they will be free to leave a relationship that does not provide them with economic support and that abuses them. Many of these men therefore use violence and threats of violence to sabotage women's efforts at education, training, and work, making it difficult for women to succeed at employment. For example, every time Bernice entered a training program or got a job, her intimate partner used vio-

lence to make certain that she could not complete the program or get to her employment on a regular basis. It took Bernice almost three years to figure out a way to safely leave her abuser so that she could go to work to support herself and her children and get off welfare. Some women continue to suffer from the effects of domestic violence, which cause mental health difficulties or drug or alcohol abuse that need treatment before they will be able to go to work.

Why is there more domestic violence in low-income households?

Certainly, economic stress causes relationships to be filled with conflict or to go under. However, in this case, I find convincing the idea that low-income men, who by definition cannot fulfill conventional societal expectations of being the head of the household and breadwinner, and who suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness, will turn to seizing power through the only means that they have available, and that is violence and threats of violence. Researchers have found more domestic violence perpetrated against the woman when she earns more money than her male partner. Since we aren't sure about what causes domestic violence in the first place, there is not at the moment an

Continued on page 12

Recommendation

All congregations need to be prepared to respond effectively to victims of domestic violence. Congregations should be safe places for women and children. Congregations also need to be places where batterers are held accountable. The first step for any congregation is a familiarity with resources in its local community, including contact information for the police department, battered women's shelters, and batterer intervention programs. Congregations can take steps to get this information out to women living in fear. For example, women's organizations in our churches, such as the Christian Church (Disciples), place information about how to get help and local emergency phone numbers in women's rest rooms at their churches, as well as in other places frequented by women such as YWCAs and 'ob-gyn' offices.

Please note that in this resource on welfare policy, the welfare system is shown to be one of the few means for women to escape domestic violence. As a result, rates of domestic violence do appear to be higher among women on welfare. However, this does not erase the fact that domestic violence exists in families at all socio-economic levels.

The following organizations can be helpful in developing your congregation's preparedness:

Faith Trust Institute (formerly the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence)
2400 North 45th Street, #10
Seattle, WA 98103
206-634-1903
www.faithtrustinstitute.org
info@faithtrustinstitute.org

The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute
2740 Greenbriar Parkway, Suite 256
Atlanta, GA 30331
770-909-0715
www.bcdvi.org
bcdvorg@aol.com



authoritative answer to this question. Providing an adequate answer to this question might shed some greater light on the causes of domestic violence in general.

If so many welfare recipients are victims of domestic violence, does this suggest that fathers are involved in family life? If so, how?

The good news is that this research on domestic violence demonstrates that men are key factors in low-income women's lives and are not the disappearing, dead-beat dads often portrayed in the media. The bad news is that some of these men are violent abusers, whose actions affect the women and children for the worse, and, because of work sabotage, trap the families in poverty.

Obviously marriage promotion among low-income single moms on welfare is problematic due to the high rates of domestic violence. Do you see any positive aspects of the promotion of two-parent families among low-income families on public assistance?

I recently posed this question to Bernice Hampton, the heroine of my book, who was fully conversant with the current marriage initiative of the Bush administration. Bernice said that if funding were available

for counseling for couples, it was possible that such one-on-one sessions could help end the isolation of the battered woman and be a first step in her getting help. In other words, marriage counseling programs could be one way for abused women to get the information and support that they needed to make an informed decision about whether the relationship should continue. However, Bernice recognizes that this assumes that these counseling opportunities would be staffed by knowledgeable and committed professionals who would not be coercing individuals into marriage, but would be supporting them in decisions that were the healthiest for them. We know that counseling programs can be of varying quality.

While current marriage promotion efforts do not intend for women to marry their abusers, how can these policies avoid being coercive?

Bernice told me that in her view abusers do not want to be married and that only when men change from being abusers can they be marriage material. She says that abusers do not want anyone to make a claim on them economically or socially. If they marry, then in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of society they have to be responsible. The abuser will thus resist the concept of marriage. Bernice believes that the only way to promote marriage is to build men up "mentally, socially, and economically," so that they have something to offer and know that they have assets. Then, she says, the men will actively choose marriage. Promoting marriage without building up the men, she explains, is like "putting the cart before the horse." Building on Bernice's points, I believe that promoting marriage without attending to building the human capabilities of both men and women is very damaging. It presents the idea of marriage as the ideal, but does not provide the opportunities for men and women to reach that ideal. It is not as much coercive as it is ultimately an abusive act that further stigmatizes poor persons and reduces their self-esteem.

What is the role of organizations that work with men?

The point of my book, and what follows

from the answer to the previous question is this: if we want to eliminate domestic violence and poverty, and promote marriage, we must work with low-income men and provide them with the assistance they need to support themselves and their families. Many low-income men have become long-term unemployed persons, poorly educated, without skills, homeless, and addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. They have a complicated set of issues that need to be addressed in a holistic manner. Funding is largely absent to address these needs. The few programs that work with men cannot do the job alone. Yet the response to this problem continues to be expenditure for marriage promotion as opposed to meeting these fundamental human needs.

What can congregations do about family violence?

Domestic violence is all about isolation. As I have tried to graphically portray in my book, the abuser isolates the woman over time so that she is more prone to his power and control and less able to seek help. Then her shame at being abused further prevents her from speaking out or getting help. She may believe that she herself is the cause of the abuse and she does not know that there are others like her in society. Congregations have a very large role to play in eliminating domestic violence. They can provide information about domestic violence as a social problem, and they can let every congregant know that there is someone in the congregation who can help. (Every congregation has a domestic violence survivor in its midst.)

The major problem is that abusers keep their partners from attending church because they know that will provide an avenue of support. Bernice's abuser never allowed her to go to church. Ultimately, after she escaped the abuse, Bernice moved to a house across the street from the church she wanted to attend, and while there, met the lovely man who would become her husband. (Her abuser had reason to keep her away!) So, what can congregations do to reach out to those who want to come to worship but cannot? There is no easy answer to that one, but creativity will go a long way. ■

Sculptor God

by Cynthia Lapp, Mt. Rainier, Maryland³

God the sculptor

hewing out beauty

from the stubborn rock that will not
be moved.

God, my rock

my healer

you carve my heavy pain

into beauty

incomprehensible

unimaginable.

WEAVING THE SOCIAL FABRIC:

Taking steps to ensure the stability, security and equity of all families...

EDUCATION

Visit some of these websites for excellent statistics, resources and studies on welfare, family, jobs, living wages, and the economy.

Children's Defense Fund

(www.childrensdefense.org/data.php)

Coalition on Human Needs (www.chn.org/)

Economic Policy Institute (www.epinet.org/)

Kids Count, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation
(www.aecf.org/kidscount/)

Wider Opportunities for Women

(www.wowonline.org/) — to find your state's *Self Sufficiency Standard* (www.sixstrategies.org)

POLICY ADVOCACY

The ecumenical community has examined welfare and family policy issues for many years. Several current efforts to address TANF and family policy issues are identified below. A visit to these sites may assist you in identifying issues for targeted advocacy efforts.

Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs

Strengthening Families Through TANF Reauthorization
www.loga.org/Hunger/TANFreauthorization.htm

Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs: Letter to Congress
www.loga.org/Hunger/domestichumanneedsletter.htm

American Friends Service Committee

Welfare Voter Campaign
www.afsc.org/welfarevoter/default.htm

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In addition to the books and organizational resources listed at the end of this publication, visit your denomination's website for theological perspectives, study papers, magazines and general resources on contemporary social issues and public policy.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND COMMUNITY ACTION

Develop relationships with the people and families most affected by the issues discussed in this publication. Through volunteering at your local soup kitchen, homeless shelter or battered women's shelter, or by supporting community organizing efforts, you can learn first hand about how welfare and family policies play out in people's lives. Some national organizations and networks are suggested below.

Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign

(www.economichumanrights.org)

Center for Community Change

(www.communitychange.org)

National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice

(www.nicwj.org/)

Welfare Made A Difference Campaign

(www.wmadcampaign.org/)

For a range of perspectives on welfare and family policy, visit the following websites:

Alternatives to Marriage Project (www.atmp.org)

Center for Law and Social Policy (www.clasp.org)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org)

Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy
(www.cffpp.org)

Council on Contemporary Families
(www.contemporaryfamilies.org)

Institute for American Values
(www.americanvalues.org)

Institute for Women's Policy Research (www.iwpr.org)

Lutheran Office of Government Affairs
(www.loga.org/TANF.org)

Marriage Savers (www.marriagesavers.org)

National Center on Fathers and Families
(www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu)

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
(www.nccusa.org/publicwitness/tanf.html)

National Organization for Women (NOW) Legal Defense and Education Fund (www.nowldef.org)

Oklahoma Marriage Initiative (www.okmarriage.org)

The Religion, Culture and Family Project, The Divinity School of the University of Chicago
(www.divinity.uchicago.edu/family)

Unitarian Universalist Association
(www.uua.org/uuawo/issues/tanf/marriage.html)

FAMILY RESOURCES

ORGANIZATIONS

Active Parenting

1955 Vaughn Rd. NW, Suite 108
Kennesaw, GA 30144-7808
800-825-0060
www.activeparenting.com

Active Parenting offers video-based parenting education programs that empower families by providing parents with the skills to help their children survive and thrive in our changing world.

American Association of Pastoral Counselors

9504A Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia 22031-2303
703-385-6967
www.aapc.org
E-Mail: info@aapc.org

The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) represents and sets professional standards for over 3,000 pastoral counselors and 100 pastoral counseling centers in North America and around the world. AAPC was founded in 1963 as an organization which certifies pastoral counselors, accredits pastoral counseling centers, and approves training programs. It is non-sectarian and respects the spiritual commitments and religious traditions of those who seek assistance without imposing counselor beliefs onto the client. Their website offers information on how to find a counselor or counseling center in your area and on how to be trained and certified as a pastoral counselor.

Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment

P.O. Box 10596
Winston-Salem, NC 27108
800-634-8325 or 336-724-1526
www.bettermarriages.org

The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment is an international, nonprofit, non-sectarian organization whose purpose is to promote better marriages by providing enrichment opportunities and resources that strengthen couple relationships, increase intimacy and enhance per-

sonal growth, mutual fulfillment and family wellness. On their website, find information on how to start a marriage enrichment ministry, contact certified leaders who can offer workshops, and learn how to become a certified leader couple.

Parenting for Peace and Justice

c/o The Institute for Peace and Justice
4144 Lindell Boulevard #408
St. Louis, MO 63108
314-533-4445
www.ppjn.org
E-Mail: ppjn@aol.com

Parenting for Peace and Justice, a program of The Institute for Peace and Justice, is an interfaith, interracial, transnational association of families of all descriptions who seek “Shalom” — well-being, wholeness, peace, justice — in our own living situations and in the broader community. PPJ recognizes that the well-being of families is tied to the well-being of our global family and the earth itself. On their website, look for the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network (FAVAN) and their campaign to promote a pledge of family nonviolence.

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG)

1726 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
202-467-8180
www.pflag.org

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) is a national nonprofit organization with over 200,000 members and supporters and almost 500 affiliates in the United States. This vast grassroots network is cultivated, resourced and serviced by the PFLAG national office, located in Washington, DC, the national Board of Directors and 14 regional directors. The PFLAG mission is to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and

advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Parents Without Partners, Inc.

1650 South Dixie Highway, Suite 510
Boca Raton, FL 33432
www.parentswithoutpartners.org
E-Mail: pwp@jti.net

Parents Without Partners provides single parents and their children with an opportunity for enhancing personal growth, self-confidence and sensitivity toward others by offering an environment for support, friendship and the exchange of parenting techniques. According to their website, Parents Without Partners, Inc., founded in 1957, is the largest international, nonprofit membership organization devoted to the welfare and interests of single parents and their children. Single parents may join one of approximately 400 chapters; they may be male or female, custodial or noncustodial, separated, divorced, widowed or never married.

PREPARE/ENRICH

c/o Life Innovations
P.O. Box 190
Minneapolis, MN 55440-0190
800-331-1661
www.lifeinnovations.com
E-Mail: cs@lifeinnovations.com

Life Innovations works with counselors and clergy to provide pre-marital counseling and marriage enrichment using the PREPARE/ENRICH program. The goal of the program is to help couples prepare for marriage (PREPARE Program) and to enrich the marriage of those already married (ENRICH Program). Over 1,000,000 couples have taken the PREPARE/ENRICH Program in the United States. Over 50,000 counselors (marital and family therapists, psychologists, social workers) and clergy of all denominations use the PREPARE/



ENRICH program throughout the United States. Through their website, locate trained counselors and identify opportunities for training and training specifically for clergy.

Stepfamily Association of America, Inc.

650 J Street, Suite 205
Lincoln, NE 68508
800-735-0329

www.saafamilies.org
E-Mail: stepfamfs@aol.com

The Stepfamily Association of America (SAA) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing support and guidance to families with children from previous relationships ... stepfamilies. Their goal is for stepfamilies in the United States to be accepted, supported, and successful. SAA provides information, education, support, and advocacy for stepfamilies and those who work with them.

BOOKS

On Family Ministry...

Garland, Diana R. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Leonard, Jr., Joe H. and Richard P. Olson. *A New Day for Family Ministry*. Bethesda, MD: An Alban Institute Publication, 1997.

Stories of Family Life...

Garland, Diana R. *Sacred Stories of Ordinary Families: Living the Faith in Daily Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publications, 2003.

Ives, Jane P. *Couples Who Cope*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1999.

Families in Social, Historical and Economic Context...

Bounds, Elizabeth M., Pamela K. Brubaker and Mary E. Hobgood, eds.

Welfare Policy: Feminist Critiques.

Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1999.

Coontz, Stephanie. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. New York: Basic Books, a Division of Harper Collins, 1992.

Pallmeyer, Jack Nelson. *Families Valued*. New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1996.

Debates in Family Policy...

Albrecht, Gloria H. *Hitting Home: Feminist Ethics, Women's Work, and the Betrayal of "Family Values."* New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2002.

Browning, Don S., Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Pamela D. Couture, K. Brynolf Lyon, Robert M. Franklin, eds. *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

The Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of Churches

brings leadership and other resources to education and advocacy efforts that promote justice for women in church and society. The Working Group's programs and projects, which bring theology and ethics to bear on critical issues, currently are focused on women and children living in poverty. The Justice for Women Working Group, in partnership with The Employment Project, offers this resource to help meet the expressed need in our churches to reflect on poverty issues and to engage in a discernment process regarding our response to the challenge they pose. The Employment Project keeps hope alive for unemployed and underemployed people by offering mutual support groups and advocates for the end of poverty by encouraging poor people and the faith community to work for systemic change. Justice for Women and The Employment Project have shared



resources and promoted each other's events and initiatives since 2000.

We wish to especially thank these people for help, inspiration, editing, and ideas:

Sally MacNichol
Mary Jane Pierce Norton
Peggy Halsey
Joanne Reich
Kay Bengston
Mary Cooper
Sarah Vilankulu
Paul Chapman
Noelle Damico
Liz Theoharis
Joe Leonard
Jacquelyn Boggess
Jody Raphael
Doris Strieter
Jackie Payne
Rita Newton
Traci West

For more information on the National Council of Churches and the Justice for Women Working Group or for more copies of this resource, contact: Karen Hessel, khessel@nccusa.org, 212-870-2298. Visit our websites at www.nccusa.org and www.employmentproject.org. This publication and an earlier resource "Staying on Course: Navigating the Shifting Tides of Government and Church Partnerships" (offering information on faith-based initiatives) are available on the NCC website.

This publication was prepared by Rev. Cathlin Baker, a minister in the United Church of Christ, on behalf of The Employment Project, and Karen McLean Hessel, M.Div., Program Director, Justice For Women, National Council of Churches. Funding provided by the NCC Justice for Women Working Group and The Employment Project.

Special thanks to Sarah Vilankulu, NCC Communications, for editorial assistance, and to Daniella van Gennep for her creative design.

Ways to Use This Resource

This resource was designed for use in a variety of settings. The publication may be most useful to congregations, local church groups or ecumenical groups who are addressing economic and social concerns. There are articles for individual readers, and there are interactive exercises for small group use.

A small group can use this publication over a period of several weeks. It may be worth having a copy for each participant. Group members could read the entire document and then assemble for several study sessions. Here are suggestions for study sessions:

- Have participants take the quiz on page 7 before they read the publication. They can keep their responses to themselves. After they have read the publication and engaged in the study sessions below, they can take the quiz again. In groups of two, have them discuss: How have their responses changed? What did they learn? Report back to the larger group.
- Read "The Many Ties That Bind" on pages 4-5 and then look at each of the discussion questions. These questions can be discussed in groups of four or by an entire group of eight people or less.
- Work through the Bible studies on page 5.

NOTES

¹ From "A Vision for Family Ministries," Appendix A. Presbyterian Church (USA) Study Paper "Living Faithfully with Families in Transition." (July, 2002)

² "Pentecost Economics" by Larry L. Rasmussen in *Social Themes of the Christian Year: A Commentary on the Lectionary*, Dieter T. Hessel, ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Geneva Press, 1983), p. 235.

³ *Sing Out New Visions: Prayers, Poems and Reflections by Women*, Jean Martensen, ed. An ecumenical collection produced by the Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, (1998). p. 68.